(c) and (d) As per the estimates, LPG production for the year 2003-04 is estimated at 7386 thousand metric tonnes.

Concessional pricing for crude by OPEC

2735. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countires (OPEC) is considering India's request for concessional pricing of crude oil supply in the near future;

(b) if so, what are the details of requests being examined by OPEC; and

(c) to what extent Government are likely to be benefited from OPEC's decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) The Government had taken up with OPEC member countries for concessions in the form of extended credit periods, soft loans and discounts by the oil exporting countries to the developing oil importing countries in situation of high oil prices. The OPEC member countries have opined that this issue should be bilaterally negotiated with the oil exporting countries while finalising the terms of oil supply.

Attack on oil refinery in Assam

2736. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:
SHRI R.P. GOENKA:
SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
SHRI SURENDRA LATH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ULFA has attacked with a rocket propelled granade in Digboi Refinery in the first week of March, 2003;

(b) whether it is also a fact that ULFA blew-up OIL's pipeline near Duliajan in upper Assam;

(c) if so, the extent of damage due to these attacks to the oil companies;

(d) whether any action plan has been initiated against the culprits; and

(e) the steps taken to check such incidents in future and ensure safety of the reference?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) On 7.3.2003 at around 11.45 A.M., a fire broke out in a petrol tank in the Tank Farm of Digboi refinery of IOCL after two loud sounds. On 8.3.2003 at 0120 hours there was a blast in the two pipelines connected to main gas distribution grid in OIL's oil fields near Duliajan. As per the media reports, the ULFA has claimed responsibility for these incidents.

(c) The loss, as reportd by the oil companies, is estimated to be Rs. 14.47 crore and Rs. 25 lakh respectively for IOCL and OIL.

(d) First information report has been lodged in connection with both the above incidents. Police investigations are on. In additions, a Magisterial enquiry by the District Magistrate, Tinsukhia is in progress in relation to the attack on tank farm of Digboi refinery.

(e) Security measures have been tightned by increase patrolling of vulnerable points by the oil company security Forces/CISF/Assam Police and Army. Request has been made to the Assam Government for deploying additional company of CRPF for Digboi refinery.

Removal of ban on new dealers

2737. SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has lifted the ban on State-owned oil companies from setting up petrol pumps and LPG agencies;